Special Education: Update

Board Presentation

August 2019

OSEP Timeline of Events

- Houston Chronicle Article (Fall 2016)
- Letter from OSEP January 2018
- TEA Corrective Action Response and Strategic Plan (April 2018)
- OSEP Response to TEA Response (October 2018)
- Submit Corrections to OSEP (January 2019)
- OSEP Visit to Texas (Spring 2019)

Texas' Strategic Plan to Improve Special Education

1. Monitoring
2. **Identification, Evaluation, and Placement (Child Find)**
3. Training Support and Development
4. Student and Family Engagement
5. Technical Assistance Networks

Identification, Evaluation, and Placement (Child Find)

OSEP's January 10, 2018 Letter Indicated:

TEA's use of the 8.5 percent indicator contributed to a statewide pattern of practices where some LEAs took actions specifically designed to decrease the percentage of children identified with disabilities.

TEA's Response

- TEC 29.011 was amended to prohibit the use of an indicator that solely measures performance based on the percentage of children receiving special education
- IDEA does not limit or restrict the number of children who can be identified as meeting IDEA's definition of a "child with a disability"

Identification, Evaluation, and Placement Child Find: Section 504

OSEP's January 10, 2018 Letter Indicated:

Some students receiving Section 504 services were not referred for an initial evaluation under the IDEA, even when teachers suspected the students may have a disability and need for special education and related services.

TEA's Response:

The suspected need for special education requires referral to IDEA. Effective monitoring, periodic review, and re-evaluation of students and their Section 504 plans will inform those decisions. One way to satisfy requirements is to follow IDEA timelines for students being served under Section 504.

Identification, Evaluation, and Placement Child Find: Dyslexia

OSEP's January 10, 2018 Letter Indicated:

Inconsistent application of policies and procedures associated with referring a student with dyslexia for special education at the district and school levels demonstrates LEAs in the State are not properly implementing the IDEA child find requirements

TEA's Response:

When a child with dyslexia or any other condition included in the definition of "specific learning disability" is suspected to need special education and related services, the LEA must conduct an evaluation in accordance with IDEA.

Strategic Plan: Identification, Evaluation, and Placement: Multi-Tiered System of Supports (MTSS)

OSEP's January 10, 2018 Letter Indicated:

A pattern of practices in ISDs in which evaluations were delayed or not conducted for children suspected of having a disability due to local policies and practices requiring completion of all tiers of RtI prior to a referral for special education.

TEA's Response:

- TEA will be developing an MTSS framework and guidance to clarify:
- The goal of MTSS is to screen early and deliver targeted supports quickly to close achievement gaps.
- Students do not have to go through an MTSS process before they are referred for a special education evaluation.

Strategic Plan: Identification, Evaluation, and Placement: Multi-Tiered System of Supports (MTSS)

OSEP's January 10, 2018 Letter Indicated:

In different schools within the same ISD and across different ISDs, staff expressed a lack of clarity as to:

- Entry/exit criteria
- Length of intervention
- How and when children move from one tier to the next

TEA's Response:

- TEA will provide enhanced guidance to support LEAs in effective implementation of MTSS components:
  - Universal Screening
  - Evidence Based Intervention
  - Progress Monitoring
  - Data Based Decision Making

Results of the Strategic Plan

- Review of all…
  - Section 504 student service plans,
  - Students in RtI six months or longer,
  - Students receiving dyslexia services, and
  - Students who should have been referred to special education based on multiple data points (grades, district benchmarks, state testing, discipline records, etc.)
- Dyslexia Handbook Revision
  - Required screening for students in kindergarten and first grade for dyslexia and related disorders.

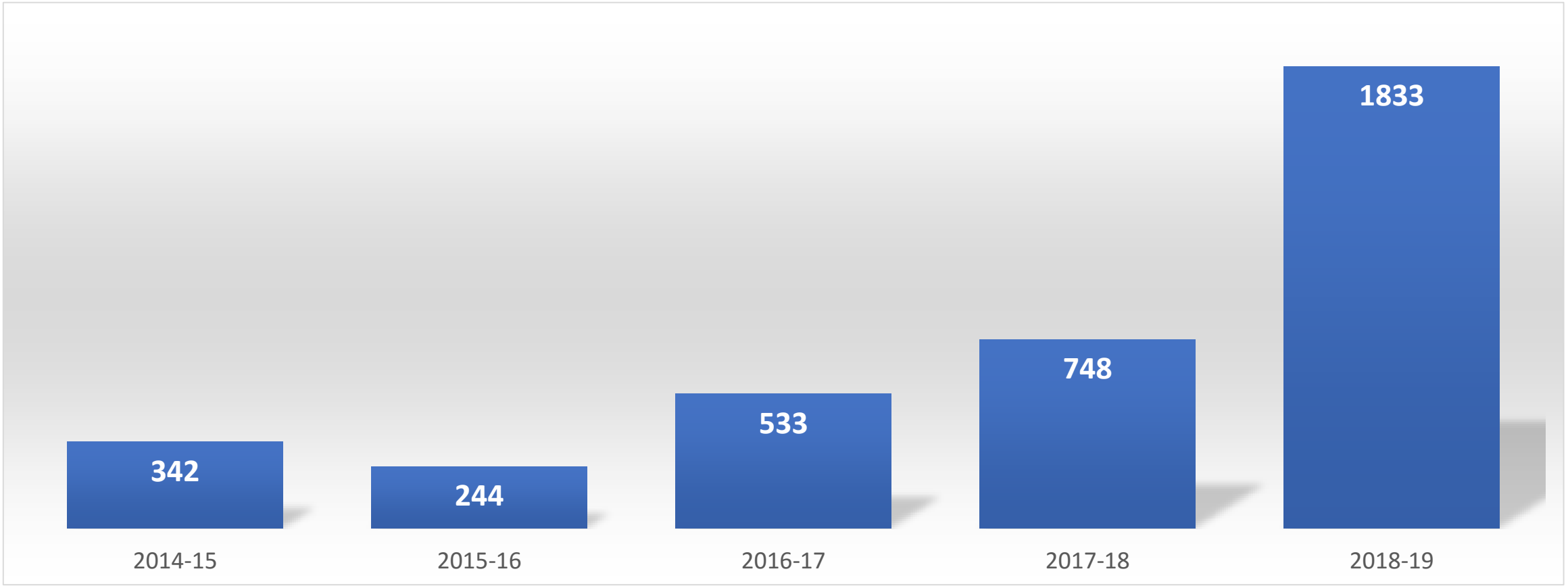
Impact on Lamar CISD

Increased number of referrals to special education.

Increased number of supports and services provided to qualified students.

Compensatory services for students who were not referred to special education in a timely manner.

Special Education Referral Data



Referral Process and Testing Timelines

15 school days to respond to a parent request with Prior Written Notice

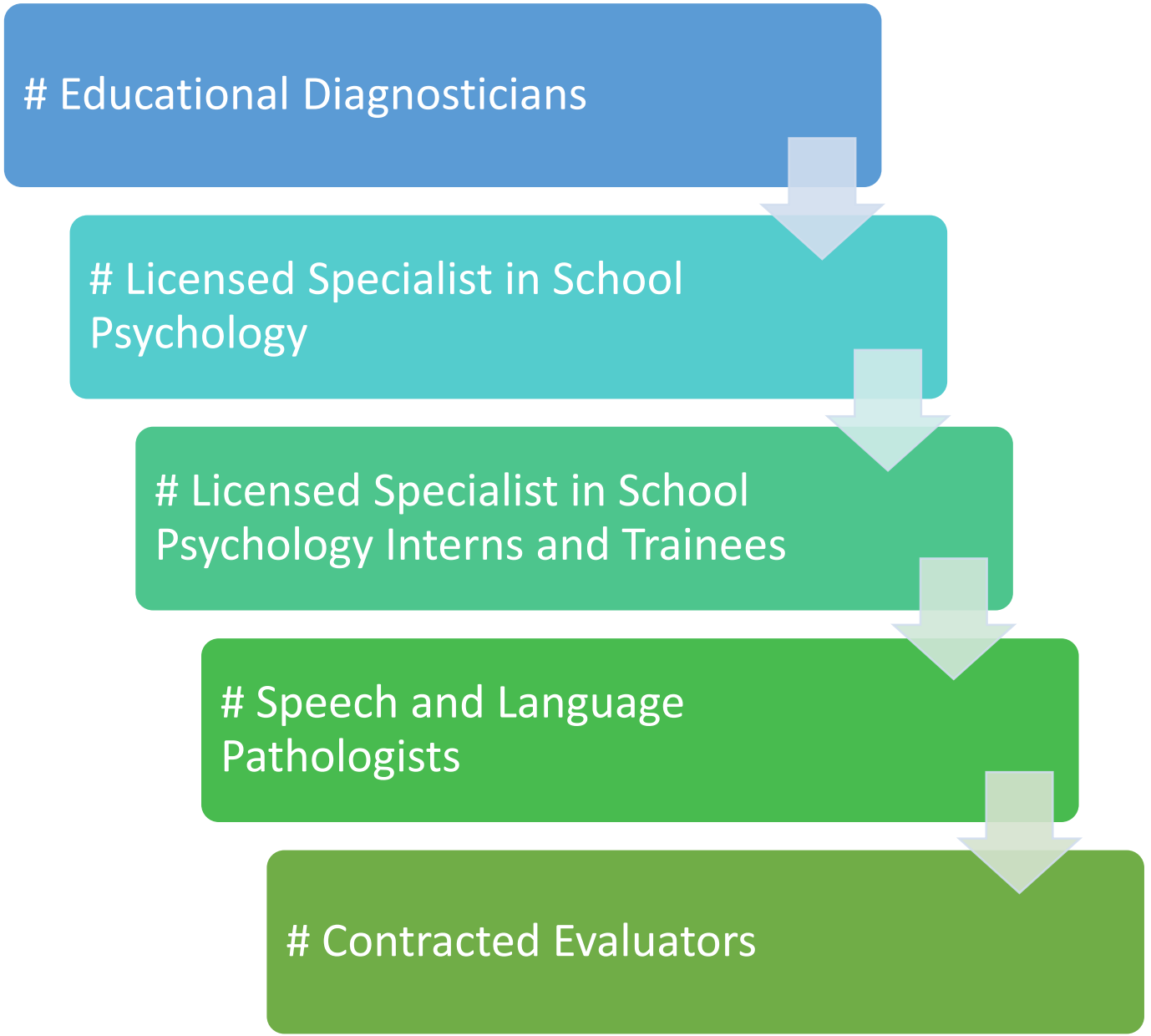
45 school days to assess from the date of parental consent

- If a student is absent from school 3 or more days from the date of consent the timelines extend by the number of days absent.

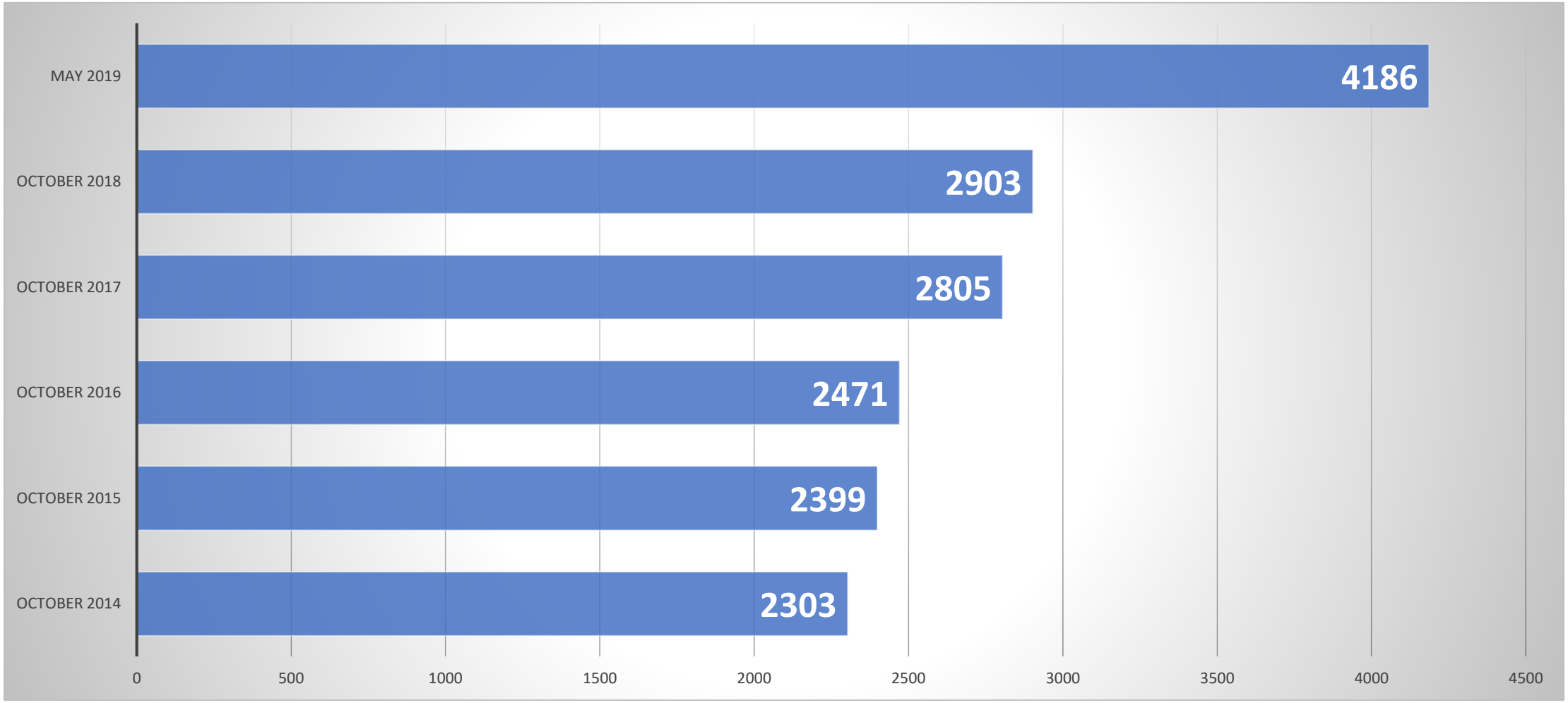
Within 30 days from the date of the FIIE the ARD committee must meet to determine student eligibility.

Timelines are in place to ensure there is adequate time for examiners to establish rapport with the student and to ensure a comprehensive evaluation is completed.

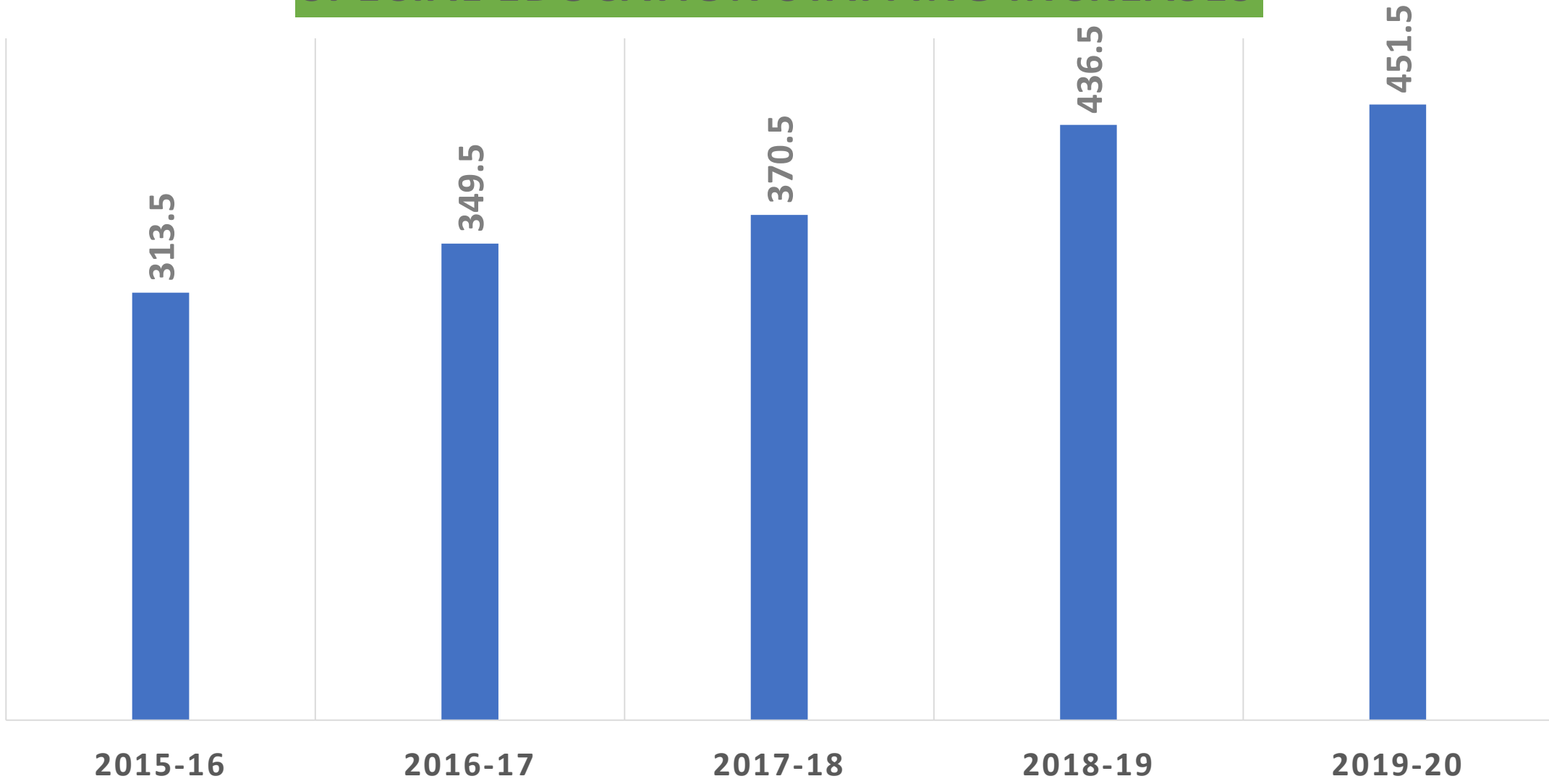
Assessment Staff and Support



Rapid Growth in Special Education



SPECIAL EDUCATION STAFFING INCREASES



Special Education Staffing

- There are also 103 itinerant staff members that include:
  - Educational Diagnosticians,
  - ARD Specialists
  - Speech and Language Pathologists,
  - Speech Assistants
  - Licensed Specialists in School Psychology,
  - Licensed Specialists in School Psychology Interns,
  - Occupational Therapists,
  - Physical Therapists,
  - Behavior Analysts,
  - Teachers of the Visually Impaired,
  - Orientation and Mobility Specialists, and
  - In-home Trainers.

Special Education Services

The majority (87%) of special education students are supported through inclusive programming.

This includes academic, behavior and early childhood services that provided to students with disabilities along with their non-disabled peers in the general education classroom.

These services may include any of the following:

- In-class or mainstream support (academic)
- PASS program support (behavioral)
- PPCD Pegasus (early childhood services)
- Speech and/or language therapy only (related services)

Special Education Services

Students who require more intensive support comprise the remaining 13%.

These students are primarily provided services in a self-contained classroom with a smaller staff to student ratio.

During the 2018-19 school year these programs consisted of the following:

- Life skills (alternate curriculum academics)
- Social Integration Program (alternate curriculum academics with behavior supports)
- Intensive Behavior Classroom (behavior)
- PPCD (early childhood)

Goal Alignment

- The goal of the Department of Academics is to focus on student outcomes with an intentional focus on ensuring student growth.
- When reviewing the special education programs we found that approximately 72% of our teaching units were designated for academic support while the other 28% or 122 teaching units were supporting behaviors with limited academic instructional support.
- This required a more in depth look at the district's programs to ensure the focus was in alignment with district and departmental goals while maintaining the integrity of support and a continuum of services for all students with disabilities.

Special Education Programs

Behavior Program Overview

PASS/SILC

- This is an inclusive program that allows students to continue receiving the majority of their academic instruction in the general education setting.
- Some students only required social skills support one time per week.
- All secondary campuses had the program and 10 elementary campuses.
- 287 students accessed the PASS program during the 2018-19 school year.
- Each program was staffed with two teaching units or more.
- 192 students that required support were at the secondary level.
- The remaining 95 students at the elementary level were at 10 campuses.
  - 50 of the 95 students were at 3 of the 10 campuses.
  - The remaining 45 students were split between 7 campuses.

Behavior Program Overview

IBC

- This is a self-contained behavior program that requires many of the students to remain in the same classroom throughout the entire school day.
- There is an academic impact because one teacher is responsible for multiple curriculums for multiple grade levels.
- This program is staffed with 2 to 2.5 teaching units.
- 83 students accessed IBC during the 2018-19 school year.
- Students traveled from Lindsey Elementary to Jackson Elementary or McNeill Elementary to Hutchison

Behavior Program Findings

- 7 secondary campuses and 5 elementary schools had the IBC program.
  - 4 of 5 Highs schools (previously only 2)
  - 2 Jr. Highs
  - 1 Middle School
- 53 of the 83 students that accessed the program were at the secondary level.
- Secondary had high number of teaching units for the PASS program because of the size of the building and not necessarily due to the required level of support for students.

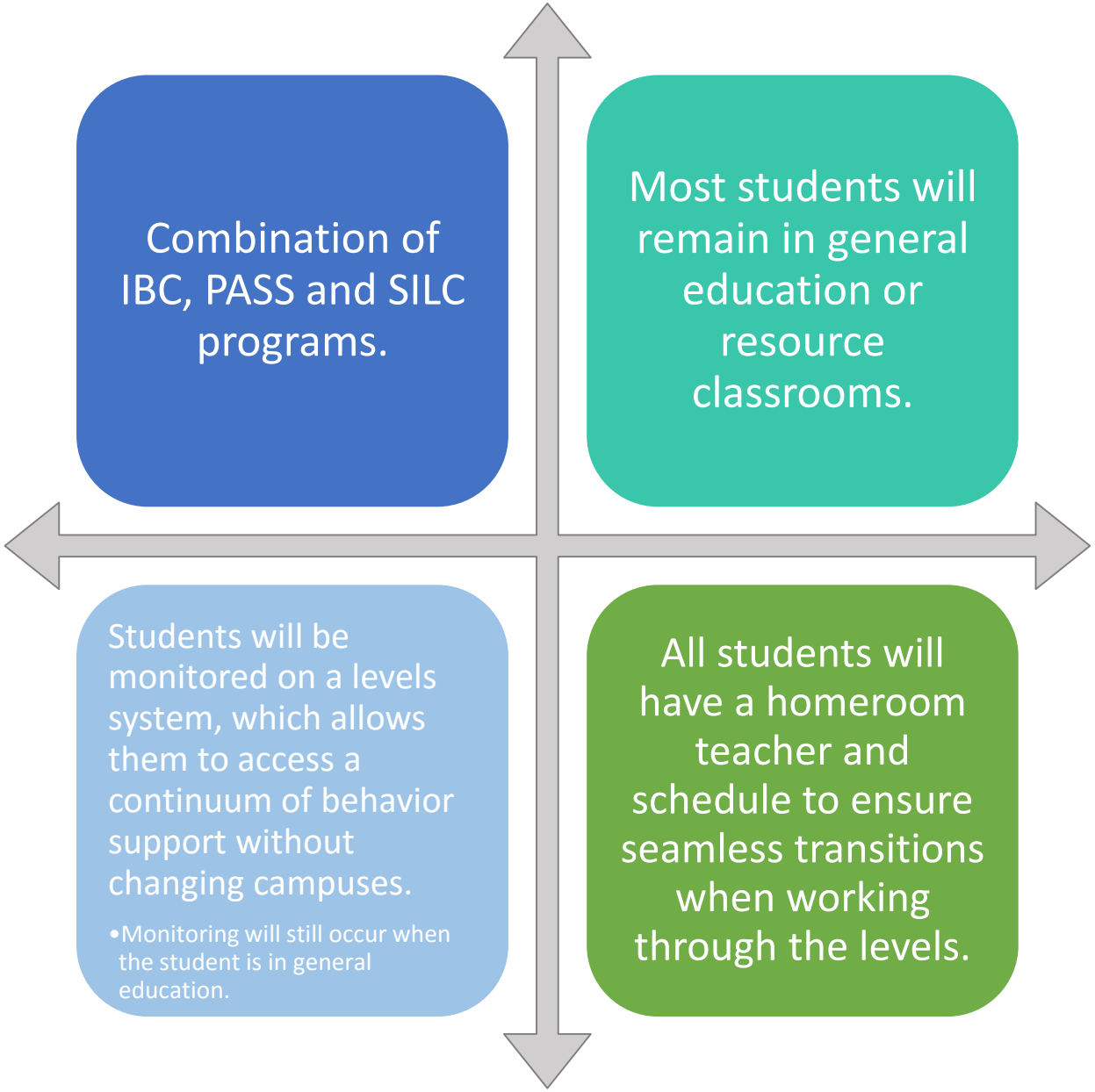
Behavior Program Findings

- Only 1 out of 5 elementary campuses had more than 10 students at one time.
- The other 4 elementary campuses ranged from 3 to 7 students.
- Elementary campuses that had both IBC and PASS/SILC programs had a high number teaching units that were in excess of the number of students being supported:

Campus	PASS	IBC	Student Totals	Teaching Units	Staff to Student Ratio
Arredondo	12	3	15	4.5 (2 teachers; 5 paras)	1:2
Bowie	9	7	16	4 (2 teachers; 4 paras)	1:2 - 1:3
Hutchison	7	12	19	4 (2 teachers; 4 paras)	1:3
Jackson	20	6	26	4.5 (2 teachers; 5 paras)	1:5 - 1:6

Social Emotional Support Classroom (SESC)

2019-20
Behavior Program



SESC Secondary Impact

Minimal impact

Secondary students will be able to remain at their zoned campus except at Roberts Middle School.

Travel time will significantly decrease for students.

Junior High students traveled from the purple and gold track to Reading for behavioral support.	Middle school students traveled from the purple, gold, and maroon tracks to Navarro for behavioral support.

SESC Elementary Impact

Increased Impact

Elementary students will remain closer to home, which reduces the amount of time spent on buses.

One elementary campus would not have to receive students from more than 4 other campuses.

Reduced number of students per campus requiring a self-contained program.

SIP and Life Skills Program Overview and Findings

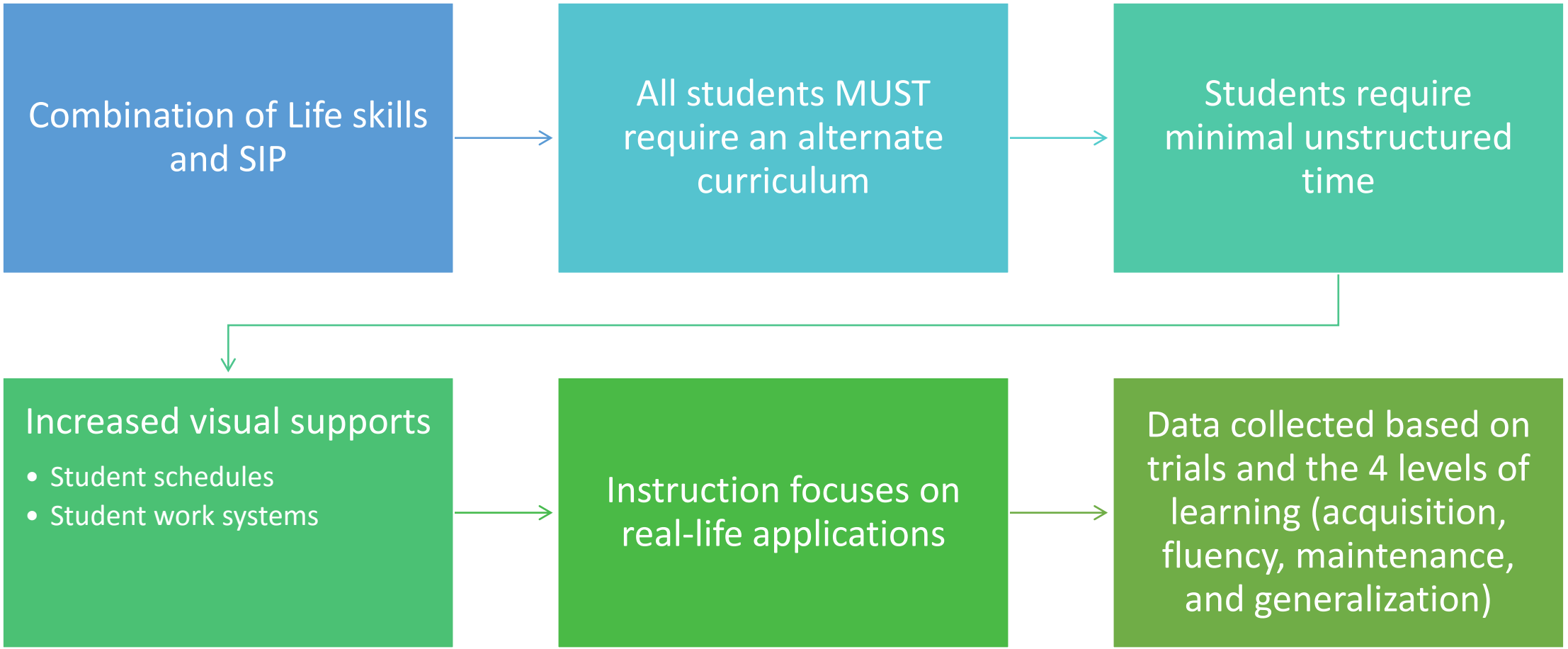
SIP

- 95% of students are on an alternate curriculum
- 95% of students have sub average intellectual abilities
- Students require highly structured environments
- Students require visual supports
- Students have difficulty with expressive, receptive and pragmatic language

Life skills

- All students are on an alternate curriculum
- All students have sub average intellectual abilities
- Students require highly structured environments
- Students require visual supports
- Students have difficulty with expressive and receptive language

Structured Learning Classroom (SLC)



Compliance Classrooms

- Intense social skills training with a high focus on target behaviors documented on the student's BIP.
- ABA Strategies will be implemented
- Classroom will be supported by a Behavior Analyst
- Program is not intended to keep students for extended periods of time.
- Goal is to teach replacement behaviors that increase student independence within a larger setting.
  - Bentley – CAP TEKS based program
  - Austin – CSLC Alternate curriculum program

SLC Secondary Impact

Minimal Impact

Less than 10 students are impacted because there is only one SIP at the secondary level.

Students can remain at their zoned campuses except at Roberts Middle School.

Less travel time for students in SIP because there will now be adequate support at their zoned campuses.

SLC Elementary Impact

Students receive specially designed instruction needed without changing campuses to access a continuum of services.

Students remain with non-disabled peers throughout their school years.

2018-19

- Life skills at 12 elementary campuses
- SIP at 8 elementary campuses

2019-20

- SLC will be at 20 elementary campuses
- 15 campuses will receive students from their zoned area only.

Elementary students will remain closer to home, which reduces the amount of time spent on buses.

District Impact

Shifted teaching units to support more academic instruction.

- 85% of special education teaching units are now designated to support academic growth.

Programs should now stabilize except in those areas where new schools are built.

- Ex: Tamarron and the Elementary Purple Track campuses.